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about carefully. What you're going to be asked to do pretty soon is vote on this amendment. And keep in mind that we're ultimately going to need 30 votes, if not 40. And I have an amendment coming up shortly that will say we're going to put this on the primary ballot. With that, I...Senator Stuhr I know will have some words to say about this. And then we're going to leave it in your hands. And with that, I thank you very much.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. You've heard the opening on AM1703. Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I thank everyone for their discussion on this issue. I think we are talking about fairness. I don't believe that our salary should be higher than the average in the state. But I think what we are talking about is being reasonable. We are talking about being fair. And I believe, as Senator Pederson said, we are talking about the respect for the office. I wanted to...yesterday, I was trying to poll each of you, because I know that the amendment was what you call a weak 25 votes. And so I did some polling. And actually, the majority still voted for the CPI. But there were...the majority were with the \$18,000, but there were also some of those that wanted to go with the higher \$24,000. And so that is why we are offering this compromise at \$21,000. I wanted to speak just a little bit about the CPI. Because I handed you out yesterday a review of the last 20 years. I'm not sure why we are so afraid. We have capped the CPI so that it cannot exceed 4 percent. Let me tell you, 20 years ago, and prior to that, we were seeing consumer price indexes in the 15 percent, and even as high as 20. But in the last 20 years, we have had only 4 years that have exceeded 4 percent. And we are capping that, so the salaries could not exceed that 4 percent, looking back in the last 20 years. So I think we are looking at something that is reasonable. Senator Erdman said, voters really want a check and a balance. But when you don't have a salary increase in 18 years, I ask you, where is the check and where is the balance? I don't see that. Also, I believe that the members of the Legislature, so to speak, are to blame for this, in the fact that we could never...I know that salary increases have been proposed. But we as a body, because every election we have half of the body running for reelection.